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Non-governmental organizations

Report of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations on its resumed 1998 session

New York, 14 to 18 December 1998

Summary

The present report contains two draft decisions on matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council.

By draft decision I, the Council would:

(a) Grant consultative status to 85 non-governmental organizations which had applied;

(b) Reclassify two organizations from special to general consultative status.

By draft decision II, the Council would approve the participation of two organizations of indigenous people not in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council in the work of the open-ended inter-sessional working group of the Commission on Human Rights established by the Council in its resolution 1995/32 to elaborate a draft declaration on the rights of indigenous people.

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I. Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council

1. The Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft decisions:

Draft decision I

Applications for consultative status received from non-governmental organizations

The Economic and Social Council decides:

(a) To grant the following non-governmental organizations consultative status:

General consultative status

International Association of Peace Foundations

United Nations Association of Russia

Special consultative status

Action Health Incorporated

Afghan Development Association

All India Women's Education Fund Association

Amicale marocaine des handicapés

Asian Centre for Organization Research and Development

Asian Women's Conference Network

Associacao Nacional das Empresarias

Association pour le développement harmonieux de la mère et de l'enfant du Cameroun

Association for the Protection of the Environment

Association of United Families International

Bangladesh Nari Progati Sangha

Bunyad Literacy Community Council

Centro de Estudios Sobre la Juventud

Civic Education Project

Commission nationale des femmes travailleuses de Guinée/Conféderation nationale des travailleuses de Guinée

Comité international des femmes africaines pour le développement

Community Social Welfare Foundation

Consell nacional de dones de Catalunya (National Women's Council of Catalonia)

Croissant-rouge algérien

David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies

Féderation des associations des handicapés-moteur

Federation of Muslim Women's Associations in Nigeria
Federation for Women and Family Planning
General Federation of Iraqi Women
General Federation of Jordanian Women
General Italian Confederation of Labour
Globe International
Globe Japan
Globetree
Groupement d'appui aux initiatives économiques des femmes
Indian Association of Parliamentarians on Population and Development
Indian Muslim Federation (UK) Initiatives: Women in Development
Inter-African Union for Human Rights
International Family Therapy Association
International Jurists Organization-Asia
International Rescue Committee
Juridicial Commission for Auto-Development of First Andean Peoples
Karnataka Manava Vikas Sangha
Korean Institute for Women and Politics
Life Education Center
Mbutu Agriculture Society
Metis National Council of Women
National Alliance of Women's Organizations
National Council of Women of the United States, Inc.
National Union of Ghana Students
National Women's Political Caucus
Network Women in Development Europe
Nigerian Centre for Research and Documentation
Nigerian Environmental Society
Northern Ireland Women's European Platform
Norwegian Federation of Organizations of Disabled People
Pacific Rim Institute for Development and Education
Pan Pacific and South East Asia Women's Association of Thailand
People's Forum 2001, Japan
Program Coordination for Integrated Health
Religious Consultation on Population, Reproductive Health and Ethics
Research, Action and Information Network for the Bodily Integrity of Women
Romanian Independent Society of Human Rights

Samuhik Abhiyan

Salubrité, propreté, hygiène et techniques d'assainissement

Service and Research Foundation of Asia on Family and Culture

Shimin Gaikou Centre

Society for the Protection of Unborn Children

S.O.S. Femmes en détresse

South Asia Human Rights Documentation Centre

Stree Mukti Sanghatana

Struggle for Change

Sudan National Committee on Harmful Traditional Practices

Thakur Hari Prasad Institute of Research and Rehabilitation for the Mentally Handicapped

Union nationale des femmes marocaines

United States Committee for the United Nations Fund for Women, Inc.

Widows and Orphans Welfare Society of Kenya

Women Justice Programme

Women's Action Group

Women's Commissions Research and Education Fund

Women's Coordinating Committee for Gulf and Arabian Peninsula

Women's Sports Foundation

Women's Union of Russia

Worldwide Organization for Women

Roster

ALAF-Association of Latin American Railways

The Park Ridge Center

Rural Institute of Medical Sciences

(b) To reclassify the following two organizations from special to general consultative status:

Caritas Internationalis (International Confederation of Catholic Charities)

World Blind Union

Draft decision II

Applications from organizations of indigenous people not in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council for participation in the work of the open-ended inter-sessional working group of the Commission on Human Rights to elaborate a draft declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples

The Economic and Social Council decides to approve the participation of the following two organizations of indigenous peoples not in consultative status with the Council in the work of the open-ended inter-sessional working group of the Commission on Human Rights, whose establishment was authorized by the Council in its resolution 1995/32:

Inter-Peoples Exchange, Inc.

International Indigenous Working Group Human Rights and Justice

II. Applications for consultative status and requests for reclassification received from non-governmental organizations

2. The Committee considered item 3 of its agenda at its 678th to 684th, 686th and 687th meetings, from 14 to 18 December 1998. It had before it a memorandum by the Secretary-General containing new applications for consultative status received from non-governmental organizations (E/C.2/1998/R.2 and Add.1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 12 and 16–27).

A. New applications for consultative status deferred from the 1998 session

3. At its 676th meeting, on 26 June 1998, the Committee had decided to defer to its resumed 1998 session the following new applications for consultative status:

Action Health Incorporated

Association for the Protection of the Environment

Community Social Welfare Foundation

European Fertilizer Manufacturers Association

Human Rights Alliance

International Federation of Inspection Agencies, Limited

International Group of P&I Clubs

International Rescue Committee

Israel Women's Network

Consell nacional de dones de Catalunya (National Women's Council of Catalonia)

South Asia Human Rights Documentation Centre

Inter-African Union for Human Rights

Women Justice Programme

Women's Exchange Programme International

4. At its 678th meeting, on 14 December 1998, the Committee decided to recommend to the Economic and Social Council that special consultative status be granted to the following organizations:

Action Health Incorporated

Association for the Protection of the Environment

Community Social Welfare Foundation

International Rescue Committee

5. At its 679th meeting, on 14 December, the Committee decided to recommend to the Council that special consultative status be granted to Women Justice Programme.

6. At the same meeting, the Committee took note of a communication from Human Rights Alliance requesting a deferment of their application to the 1999 session of the Committee.

7. At its 680th meeting, on 15 December, the Committee decided to recommend to the Council that special consultative status be granted to Consell nacional de dones de Catalunya (National Women's Council of Catalonia).

8. At its 684th meeting, on 17 December, the Committee decided to recommend to the Council that special consultative status be granted to Inter-African Union for Human Rights.

9. At its 686th meeting, on 18 December, the Committee decided to recommend to the Council that South Asia Human Rights Documentation Centre be granted special consultative status.

10. Also at the same meeting, the Committee decided to defer the applications of Israel Women's Network and Women's Exchange Programme International to its 1999 session pending the receipt of further information requested by the Committee.

11. At its 687th meeting, on 18 December, the Committee decided to defer to its 1999 session the applications of the European Fertilizer Manufacturers Association, the International Federation of Inspection Agencies, Limited, and the International Group of P&I Clubs, pending further discussion on how to address the issue of such organizations in relation to conformity with the definition of a non-governmental organization as set out in Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

B. New applications for consultative status

12. At its 682nd meeting, on 16 December 1998, the Committee decided to recommend to the Council that special consultative status be granted to the General Federation of Iraqi Women. The representative of the United States of America stated that her delegation wished to disassociate itself from the decision since it was not convinced that the organization was independent from the Iraqi Government.

13. At its 683rd meeting, on 16 December, the Committee took note of a communication from Fundacion Colosio A. C. that it wished consideration of its application to be deferred to the 1999 session of the Committee.

14. At its 686th meeting on 18 December, the representative of the United States requested a vote on the proposal to recommend special consultative status to Centro de Estudios Sobre la Juventud since the United States was not convinced that this organization was independent from the Cuban Government. The proposal was adopted by a roll-call vote of 13 to 1 with no abstentions. The voting was as follows:

In favour:

Chile, China, Costa Rica, Cuba, Greece, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Philippines, Russian Federation, Sudan, Tunisia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Against:

United States of America.

15. Before the vote, a statement was made by the representative of Cuba.

16. At the same meeting, the Committee decided to recommend to the Council that the United Nations Association of Russia, a national organization, be granted general consultative status, mainly on the basis of its broad scope of activities. The representative of the United States stated that although her delegation would not block consensus, it nevertheless had serious reservations concerning the decision of the Committee to recommend that general consultative status be granted to this organization under the guidelines of Council resolution 1996/31.

17. At its 687th meeting, on 18 December, the Committee decided to defer further consideration of the applications for consultative status of the following organizations to its 1999 session pending further clarification:

Association nationale de soutien aux enfants en difficulte et en institution (ANSEDI)

Council for the Defence of Human Rights and Freedoms

Europe 2000

Foundation Projekta for Women and Development Services (Stichting Projekta)

International Women Judges Foundation (IWJF)

Local Government International Bureau

18. The Committee recommended that the Economic and Social Council grant consultative status to 84 non-governmental organizations (see sect. I, draft decision I).

C. Requests for reclassification deferred from the 1998 session

19. At its 664th meeting, on 28 May 1998, the Committee considered a request for reclassification to special consultative status of International PEN, an organization on the Roster, and decided to defer further consideration of this organization's request to the second part of its session in June 1998, following the request of a delegation for additional time to study the information provided by the organization.

20. At its 677th meeting, on 1 July 1998, the Committee decided to defer consideration of this request to its resumed 1998 session.

21. At its 686th meeting, on 18 December 1998, the Committee decided once again to defer the application to its 1999 session since one delegation still had questions to pose to the organization and was not yet ready to make a decision.

D. New requests for reclassification

22. The Committee decided to recommend that the Economic and Social Council reclassify the following two organizations from special to general consultative status:

Caritas Internationalis (International Confederation of Catholic Charities)

World Blind Union

23. At its 687th meeting, on 18 December 1998, the Committee considered a request by the International Council of Environmental Law for reclassification from special to general status. The Committee decided to defer the request to its 1999 session pending the receipt of further clarification from the organization.

24. At the same meeting, the Committee considered the request for reclassification from Roster to special consultative status of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and decided that it, too, should be deferred to its 1999 session pending the receipt of further information from the organization.

III. Review of quadrennial reports deferred from the 1998 session

25. At its resumed 1997 session, the Committee decided to defer consideration of the quadrennial reports of the International Islamic Federation of Student Organizations and Mutual Assistance of the Latin American Government Oil Companies (ARPEL) to its 1998 session. At its 664th meeting, on 28 May, the Committee, noting that the requested clarifications had not yet been provided by either of these organizations, decided to defer consideration of their reports to the second part of its 1998 session in June. At its 677th meeting, on 1 July 1998, the Committee decided once again to defer consideration of the reports of these two organizations.

26. At its 687th meeting, on 18 December 1998, the Committee decided to defer to its 1999 session the reports of the International Islamic Federation of Student Organizations and Mutual Assistance of the Latin American Government Oil Companies (now known as the Regional Association of Oil and Gas Companies in Latin America and the Caribbean).

IV. Implementation of Council decision 1996/302

27. The Committee considered item 5 of its agenda at its 687th meeting, on 18 December 1998. It had before it an informal paper containing the applications from non-governmental organizations that are currently on the Roster for the purposes of the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development to expand their participation in other fields of the Economic and Social Council.

28. At the same meeting, the Committee decided to postpone the consideration of the applications of Green Field Club of Ghana and the Council for Human Ecology-Kenya to its 1999 session.

V. Review of the methods of work of the Committee: implementation of Council resolution 1996/31 and decision 1995/304

29. The Committee considered item 6 of its agenda at its 678th, 685th and 687th meetings on 14, 17 and 18 December 1998.

A. Consideration of special reports

30. At its 677th meeting, on 1 July 1998, the Committee decided to defer further consideration of the special report provided by Liberation concerning its accreditation of an individual with a criminal past during the forty-ninth session of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities and the fifty-third session of the Commission on Human Rights.

31. At its 679th meeting, on 14 December 1998, the Committee took note of additional information provided by the organization. It also received an apology from the organization's representative who was present in the meeting, as well as an assurance that Liberation had implemented stricter measures in order to avoid a recurrence of such an incident.

32. At its 687th meeting, on 18 December, the representative of India stated that his delegation had taken note of the apology and assurances provided by Liberation. In addition, while noting that the incident was attributable to an individual who misled the organization, he nevertheless cautioned that should such an incident recur, the Committee would take stronger action against the organization.

33. At its 676th meeting, on 26 June 1998, the Committee had before it a letter from the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran regarding the accreditation, by four organizations in consultative status with the Council, of individuals belonging to a terrorist group to participate in the fifty-fourth session of the Commission on Human Rights. At the same meeting, the Committee decided that these four organizations (World Confederation of Labour; Pax Christi, International Catholic Peace Movement; International Federation of Women in Legal Careers; and Movement against Racism and for Friendship among Peoples) should each submit a special report.

34. At its 685th meeting, on 17 December, the Committee had before it the special reports submitted by the above four organizations (see E/C.2/1998/2). After having reviewed the special reports before it, the Committee took note of the reports of two organizations: Pax Christi, International Catholic Peace Movement; and the Movement against Racism and for Friendship among Peoples. The observer for the Islamic Republic of Iran stated that his delegation was not satisfied with the reports provided by the other two organizations, World Confederation of Labour and International Federation of Women in Legal Careers, and requested the suspension of consultative status of both organizations. Some delegations noted that they would like additional information on the matter and that representatives of the organizations concerned should be present at the 1999 session of the Committee to respond to questions.

35. At its 638th meeting, on 13 January 1998, the Committee decided to request the International Agency for Rural Industrialization (INARI) to submit a special report to the Committee at its 1998 session explaining certain activities it had undertaken.

36. At its 685th meeting, on 17 December, the Committee noted that the organization had not submitted a special report and that repeated attempts to contact the organization had been unsuccessful. The Committee decided to recommend to the Economic and Social Council that it withdraw the consultative status of the International Agency for Rural Industrialization in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 57 of Council resolution 1996/31.

37. At its 665th meeting, on 29 May, the Committee had before it a letter from the Government of Colombia informing the Chairman of the Committee that two non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Council, the Indian

Movement "Tupaj Amaro" and the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY), had accredited members belonging to an armed revolutionary group in Colombia for participation in the fifty-fourth session of the Commission on Human Rights. At the same meeting, the Committee decided that more detailed information on this matter should be provided both by the Government of Colombia and the Chairman of the Commission on Human Rights.

38. At its 685th meeting, on 17 December, the Committee decided to request the Indian Movement "Tupaj Amaro" and the World Federation of Demographic Youth (WFDY) to submit special reports to its session in 1999. The Committee also requested its secretariat to invite the organizations to send representatives to be present during its 1999 session.

B. Consideration of organizations in relation to conformity with the provisions of Council resolution 1996/31

39. Although not formally addressed as an item, the Committee, at both its regular and resumed sessions in 1998, had expressed the need to discuss the issue of organizations whose defining characteristics were not in strict conformity with the definition of a non-governmental organization as originally set out in Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

C. Consultation between the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations and the non-governmental organizations community

40. The Committee had before it a summary prepared by the Chairman on a consultation held informally between the Committee and the non-governmental organizations community on the two following issues: accreditation and code of conduct. A number of delegations expressed the view that they needed more time to review the summary. Consequently, the Committee decided to continue the discussion on this issue at the next session of the Committee, in 1999.

D. Evaluation of the new methods of work of the Committee

41. The guidelines to improve the methods of work of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, adopted at its resumed 1997 session, have been applied by both the Committee and its secretariat throughout the year. It was recognized that the new approach greatly facilitated the work of the Committee, although it did increase considerably the workload of the NGO Section, Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, prior to and during the Committee meetings. Moreover, the Committee's attention was drawn to the fact that the functions and responsibilities of the NGO Section are continually expanding to keep pace with the ever-growing number of applications for consultative status and the diverse, more substantive demands of a larger more active NGO community. In addition, the NGO Section is increasingly being called upon to assist other sections of the Department in NGO-related activities, including the preparation of and follow-up to intergovernmental meetings. Furthermore, in the light of the prevailing emphasis on supporting a well-informed NGO community and on encouraging NGO participation in the various activities of the Council and the United Nations at large, the NGO Section has responded by holding, throughout the year, a series of briefing sessions

and workshops aimed at informing and maximizing the contribution of NGOs in consultative status.

42. In view of these new developments, although the Committee did not have the time at this session to review the issue of ensuring adequate secretariat support on a continuing basis, it was suggested that the item on strengthening the NGO Section of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs remain on the agenda.

VI. Implementation of Council resolution 1995/32

43. At its 687th meeting, on 18 December, the Committee, in accordance with Council resolution 1995/32, considered the applications from organizations of indigenous peoples not in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council that are interested in participating in the work of the open-ended inter-sessional working group of the Commission on Human Rights established by the Council to elaborate a draft declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples.

44. At the same meeting, the Committee decided to recommend that the Economic and Social Council authorize two organizations of indigenous people not in consultative status with the Council to participate in the work of the working group (see sect. I, draft decision II).

45. Also at the same meeting, the Committee decided to defer to its 1999 session consideration of the application of Nanticoke Native Americans, United Maw-shak Nation of Moors, pending further discussion of its conformity with the definition of "indigenous people" as set out in Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/32.

VII. Organization of the work of the session

A. Opening and duration of the session

46. The Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations held its resumed 1998 session from 14 to 18 December 1998. The Committee held 10 meetings (678th to 687th meetings).

B. Attendance

47. Representatives of the following States members of the Committee attended the session: Bulgaria, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ethiopia, Greece, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Paraguay, Philippines, Russian Federation, Sudan, Tunisia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

48. The following States Members of the United Nations were represented by observers: Algeria, Azerbaijan, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Egypt, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Lebanon, Mexico, Morocco, Pakistan, Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey, Ukraine, Venezuela and Yemen.

49. The following non-member State was represented by an observer: Holy See.

50. The following entity having received a standing invitation to participate as an observer in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly and maintaining a permanent observer mission at Headquarters was represented by an observer: Palestine.

51. The following specialized agencies were represented: International Labour Organization, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

52. The following non-governmental organization in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council was represented by an observer: International Chamber of Commerce.

C. Election of officers

53. At the 678th meeting, on 14 December, the Committee elected, by acclamation, Joyce Duffy (Ireland) as Vice-Chairman and also as Rapporteur, to take the place of Sean MacDonald (Ireland), who had resigned.

VIII. Provisional agenda for the 1999 session of the Committee

54. The Committee considered item 9 of its agenda at its 687th meeting, on 18 December 1998. It had before it the draft provisional agenda for its 1999 session (E/C.2/1998/L.3).

55. At the same meeting, a statement was made by the representative of Cuba.

56. Also at the same meeting, the Committee approved the provisional agenda for its 1999 session, as orally amended during the discussion, for submission to the Economic and Social Council.[1]

IX. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its resumed 1998 session

57. At its 687th meeting, on 18 December 1998, the Committee adopted the draft report contained in an informal paper, and authorized the Rapporteur to finalize it in consultation with the members of the Committee, as appropriate.

Notes

[1] At its organizational session for 1999, the Council approved the provisional agenda for the 1999 session of the Committee in its decision 1999/205.

Annex

List of documents before the Committee at its resumed 1998 session

Document number	*Agenda item*	*Title or description*
E/C.2/1998/R.2 and Add.1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 12, 16–27	3 (b)	Memorandum by the Secretary-General on new applications for consultative status
E/C.2/1998/2	6	Note by the Secretary-General entitled "Special reports"
E/C.2/1998/L.3	9	Provisional agenda for the session of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations to be held in 1999